SU45 - This fanzine does NOT contain a nude centerfold

Studs UP

The Australian Fans' Perspective

March
2000
$3
(inVALUable)

Knights rediscover their FLARE!

(Obviously not a Pains Wessex Red Handflare MK2)

(This photograph has NOT been digitally enhanced)

In this issue

Labbozzetta Cleared?
We don't think so!

Why something smells fishy in Queensland

Our latest Premier League Preview ever!
(with BONUS early season review!)

And yet another red card for someone at A&BSW

PLUS
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Studs Up - P O Box 53, Oakleigh South 3167

6 issues - $18 12 issues - $32

(make cheques/mail orders out to 'Studs Up')

Editor – Kevin Christopher
Contributors – David Arnold, Andre Kruger, Stuart Jones, Stephen Pitman, Kasey Puyenbroek, Dicko, Grant Stantiall, Sean Brown, Darth Conroy and fans of Oz soccer.
Pics and other important stuff: Michael Cronin

Disclaimer (of sorts)

Studs Up is a non-profit fan-based magazine (fanzine) which aims to eliminate the game of the wretched evil that has gripped the game since Oz last made the World Cup finals. This provides us with broad parameters to work within, and we hope we don't offend anybody with the contents of these pages.

If you have a genuine beef over something in a 'Studs Up', get in contact through the usual channels and we'll happily discuss a retraction in a future issue – IF we think it warrants it. Forget suing us, we're in enough debt as it is.

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Yes! We actively seek contributors!

Especially those who know a bit about soccer (we need to put that because we've had some weird stuff in the mail lately). Doesn't need to be Nobel Prize stuff, just some good old fashioned bollocking for those in power, with examples of why they are no longer in a position to deserve the respect or confidence of the soccer public.

Or you can write in and tell us what a crap fanzine this is. (We might not print it though.)

3rd April 2000

David Arnold
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Soccer Australia is an incompetent, amateur organisation. It has no clue how to run a sport as a business, much less make tough decisions for the benefit of all.

I have put together a mini-petition - taken from the Perth Glory, ozsoccer e-mail list and a Carlton home game. The petition notes the positives and negatives of SA Chairman Basil Scarsella's reign, and concludes that his stewardship has come at too high a cost to the game. We ask for his resignation.

Scarsella is only the most prominent issue of a deeply-rooted problem. Essentially, the game in Australia is run by amateurs for amateurs. There IS nothing wrong with this, yet we will always be behind those sports which have embraced professionalism. Shit, even the 'genteel' sport of cricket embraced professionalism over 20 years ago - look at where they are now!

We are already behind the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and it's showpiece league, the MLS. How can this be? Well, for starters, the USSF is a professionally-run league, which, believe it or not, actually promotes the benefit of the game above self-interest.

The USSF has hosted two hugely successful events, the 1994 Mens WC and the 1999 Womens WC. The USSF is clearly an organisation which has it's act together.

MLS is a success. Now in it's 5th year, it has been highly successful in keeping home-grown Yank talent in the US. Players only seem to sign for an overseas club in their late 20's - witness the effect Joe-Max Moore has had at Everton. Star players such as Eddie Pope and Joe
McBride have resisted offers from 1st division clubs in Europe to stay in America. OUR NSL is so badly run that Ante Kovacevic, a player with the Melbourne Knights, is trialling at an MLS team!

MLS has attracted 'name' foreign players the calibre of Lotthar Matthaus and Hristo Stoichkov. Other stars to play in the league are Jaime Moreno, Raul Diaz Arce and Walter Zenga. We, meanwhile, attract the likes of Mick Conroy and Zoltan Zold.

How can the Yanks possibly be good at soccer? We'll, they're not quite there yet, but they are giving themselves the best chance. A strong, professionally run organising body and attractive league means they really don't even have to work hard at it.

I am becoming increasingly disturbed at the disparity of our hugely-successful expats living their crust in highly-competitive, professionally-run leagues but when they return to Australia...

Until the game in Australia decides to embrace professionalism and the benefit of all, not just a few, we will always be behind the world and I will refer to SA as "Soccer Amateurs"

22nd March 2000

David Arnold
dga@alphalink.com.au

Basil Scarsella
Chairman
Soccer Australia

Dear Mr. Scarsella,

I request this letter be read out at the next meeting of the SA executive committee.

During your reign as Chairman of Soccer Australia, the following things have happened :

Soccer Australia are now in the black.

A new marketing deal has been reached.

The Hall of Fame was established.

The negatives include :

Australia's FIFA World Ranking dropped from the 20's to the 80's, now behind Albania and Senegal.

Australia failed to qualify for the Confederation's Cup, losing 1-0 to New Zealand in Brisbane.

Australia went 15 months without playing a full international game.

The much-promised website has failed to eventuate. Soccer Australia is now the only governing body of a major National League in the country without a website.

The success of the Joeys in New Zealand has not been followed upon.

You failed to take decisive action against the Adelaide Sharks, resulting in the highly embarrasing scenario of a team being declared bankrupt just days before the start of the 1999-2000 NSL season.

You failed to perform due diligence checks on the status of clubs in the league, witness the Kingz being subjected to 2 winding-up orders in NZ courts (refer paragraph above)

You failed to address the player drain problem

You failed to secure a naming sponsor for the 1999-2000 season (not that I blame the sponsors for pulling out given your leadership)

You failed to ensure that the clubs understand the need for critical reforms of the NSL.

You failed to ensure the critical reforms of the NSL will go ahead in the 2000 offseason. As a result, these reforms MAY go ahead just as we are beginning the 2002 WC qualifiers.

You failed to get the clubs to sign an indemnity preventing them from taking legal action against Soccer Australia in the event of a restructured NSL.

Why not press ahead with reforms knowing full well they will be obscured by the Olympic Games? Instead, we'll get a whole bunch of negativity just as the 2002 WC qualifiers begin and there will be little chance of deflecting it.
I am tempted, sorely tempted, to say you're doing this just to highlight how incompetent your administration is.

There are no initiatives in place (to my best knowledge) to follow on from what should be a highly successful Olympic Football Tournament.

The highs of the 1998 WC qualifiers and enthuasiastic entries of the newer professional clubs such as Spirit, Glory, Carlton, Kingz and Paramatta is slowly being eroded, as reflected by the 11% reduction of crowds this season - despite the addition of 2 teams.

The NSL has not been marketed or promoted to a significant degree by your administration, as is reflected by the 11% reduction of crowds this season - despite the addition of 2 teams.

Looking at your stewardship, I conclude the benefits of your administration are outweighed by the negatives. Your reign has come at too high a cost to this game.

I am asking for you to resign your position as Chairman of Soccer Australia. Your track record has proven you are not up to the task of running the game in this country.

Yours sincerely,

David Arnold (for)

Brian Doherty
Garry Elliot
Bernard Youel
Lynda Youel
Brett Rowe
Tony Calder
Joel Gaskell
Keith Saisell
Simon Fletcher
Rory Campbell
Geoff Coy
Tony Ising
Adrian Smith
Jason Hunt
Michael Teal
Ryan Hedley
Geoff Shafran
Margo Star
Eamon Duffy
Neil Harrison
David Barclay
David Bintley
John MacGauran
Harry Georgiadis
Mark Fisher
John Zyto
Rohan Christian
Tony Maher
Matthew Corset
Paris Brankan
Joe Laface
Suzanne McKenzie
John Herring
Lou Sticca
Con Monteleone
Maria Monteleone
Dan Durbidge
Sam Prenesti
Claire Puking
Rick Stamublic
David Tonna
Victor Love
Michael Witheford
Richard Roberts
Louise Pheyn
Mary Xiraopkis
Angela Difore
Sean Douglas
Sally Orpin
Helen Fisher
Dominic Lappe
Rose Griginful
Justin Irvine
Ernie Howarth
John Ringland
Joe Crupi
Simon Lee
Julian Campbell

To that list you can add the editorial staff of SU, and presumably most of our contributors and readers. We've had very little corresponding disputing our assessment of affairs back in SU43, and we are thrilled to see David take up the gauntlet we long since gave up on.

Sadly, we can't see much happening unless the likes of Ray Gatt and John Economos take the big stick out. And we all know the chances of that happening….
So, it looks like it'll be up to the likes of Peter Desira, Mike Lynch, Mike Cockerill, John Vrtaric and, er, us as usual.

Time to show we care

Never before have we turned over page three to an 'outsider', but David Arnold has pretty well managed to sum up the feelings of most of the fans we know. And that is quite a few. The common theme amongst supporters' discussions this season has been their general disillusionment in the future of the sport in Australia.

This, to us, is extraordinary. Considering the Joeys created history late last year, South Melbourne created history earlier this year, the Socceroos have just put (arguably) their best ever combination on the park, and yet there is an overwhelming sense of apathy and fear amongst the game's core supporters.
It doesn't help that most of the mainstream publicity tends to be of the negative variety, but as Studs Up has shown over the past few years, there is nothing to be gained from ignoring administrative incompetency.

So we must applaud David Arnold and all those who choose to follow his path. His example of contacting the media via a mass mailout will be viewed by some as naïve, and others as shit-stirring. But until the sport cleans up its act OFF the field, we have absolutely no chance of getting it right ON the field. As we stated clearly enough in SU43 – Basil, it's time to go.
And can you take a few of your friends with you please!

Violence raises its ugly head yet again…

The latest outburst of violence at Belmore should have set alarm bells ringing at SocAus HQ but going on the initial statements from the various parties it seems that everyone is just happy for hooliganism to run its course.

For those that missed it, referee Simon Micallef and his assistants were forced to wait in the centre circle until police could provide a safe (!?!) escort to the dressing rooms. On the same weekend, Melbourne-based Perth fans were subjected to some distasteful treatment from the South Melbourne fans with advice from security to stay behind for a while to avoid an ambush. The threat of fines and good behavior bonds seems pointless – they're just not enforced anyway, so the clubs have very little to fear.

We hate to bring up the Costanzo incident again, but it seems some people have very short memories. Already this season in Melbourne we have had some very disturbing scenes but either the match inspectors are not including them in their reports or the administrators don't really care about the safety of the average supporter.

At a time when the AFL is struggling to hold on to its supporter base, there would appear to be no better time, with the Olympics coming up, to try and get a few disenfranchised footy fans to thesoccer. But if they are going to witness scenes similar to those in recent weeks, perhaps its better if we don't try and attract them at all. It just might put them and their kids off for life.

Tana pulls 'Burnt Sanger' from the fire

On a positive note, there was something strangely (or should that be Stangely) satisfying about Nick Tana doing a classic political backflip and offering Bernd Stange a one year extension to his current contract within days of announcing that his contract *wouldn't* be renewed at the end of the season.

Tana's original decision stunned the soccer fraternity on both sides of the continent, but while the eastern staters shrugged their shoulders and got on with life, fans and the media in Perth figured that Bernd had achieved far more than Nick had given him credit for.

Their reaction was brilliant, and the result deserved.

Get the Book out!

Red card to ABSW for their cover story on March 21. Under the banner **'CLEARED'**came the sub-heading **'Labbozzetta vindicated after seven year court battle'**.
Well, okay it makes a nice story for the front page, and of course the writer (John Economos) was more than happy to let Big Tony reveal his feelings and thanks for the support he got from the club, his family, the soccer fraternity and so on. As the man himself claimed:

"I went against the advice of my solicitor, barrister and QC not to appeal against the original verdict. But I just had to fight on, as clearing my name was most important to me".

But for those that actually bothered to read the entire story, they would have been confused by the findings released by the Full Bench of the NSW Licensing Court.

"We are satisfied that this (nine Months) was an appropriate period for a s17(2)(f) declaration and that the period has been "served" ".

Huh? That doesn't sound like cleared to us. And it certainly doesn't warrant front page treatment. But it was probably just another slow news week in Sydney, 'cos surely it wouldn't just be JE giving an old mate some positive press, would it?

Yellow card to Ray Gatt and 'The Australian' for their sensationalist report on the front page (Jan 29) over George Negus's supposed expenditure blow-out. Soccer Australia immediately put out a press release clarifying the progress of the investigation, but that didn't prevent the damage already done.
Ray Gatt should be ashamed of himself for pushing the story, but it ain't that surprising. Ray just can't seem to stop himself from raising anything negative from the Hill era.
Seriously Ray, try reporting on the game for a change and leave the dirty laundry stuff to the fanzines, eh?

(hate to do this but…)
Yellow card to Johnny Warren for his insistence on SocAus appointing a Technical Director during that lengthy debate on 'On the Ball' on April 9. Whether he's effective or not, the position of 'Technical Director – National Teams & Elite Player Development' is currently held by Les Scheinflug. We know Les hasn't exactly set the world on fire in his new role, but we would have thought that 'The Guru' would know his ex-teammate had been 'shifted upstairs' as they say in Europe.

Yellow card to a certain Melbourne Knights spokesman for a remarkable conversation held with a SU reader a month or so before Peter Beardsley actually set foot on these shores. Our spy just wanted to enquire about the upcoming guest appearances. He spoke to a gentleman with the initials RH, and advised him that he was researching a story for that excellent Pommie mag *'When Saturday Comes'*, presuming the Knights would be pleased with the potential publicity, especially in the international arena. Unfortunately RH was unable to confirm much, and more importantly, the answers to questions were of the one word variety with the words 'blood' and 'stone' apparently coming to mind. But our spy did manage to extract the following:
He will be playing against Carlton and South Melbourne.
A 'consortium' is funding the trip.
They might look at doing this again depending on a) crowd turn-out and b) how he plays.
"A fascinating insight, I'm sure you will concur", our spy lamented.
As it turned out, PB only played an hour of the derby, by which time Knights coach Vlado Vanis deduced Michael Reda could do a better job and the $20,000 a game man trudged off to the bewilderment of a record Knights attendance. Personally, we thought the Knights midfield was holding its own until Pete went off. Not that we could be too sure, 'cos we were too busy watching out for the flares and king hits flying around behind the northern goal.
Yep, that's where the idea for the cover came from, but do ya reckon SocAus have done anything about it?

Chile (23), Slovakia (21), Bulgaria (37), Australia (89)

Funny that. We always seem to be whinging about the lack of opportunities for our national team, yet when they do arise we somehow manage to botch it up anyway.
Okay, so the timing wasn't quite ideal, but beggars can't be choosers and we really should have made every effort to ensure we went close to winning the tournament, and start to make some serious inroads in the world rankings department.

As it turned out, the teams competing were as evenly matched as the results suggest, and one or two players of genuine star quality may well have been enough to earn an extra couple of points here or there. Despite finishing bottom of the 'group', Australia proved that the gap between us and the rest of the world is closing at an increasingly rapid rate.

The lead-up was littered with the usual withdrawals and injury concerns but as Frank Farina himself rightly pointed out when announcing his touring party:

"It has a blend of age and experience and some of our younger prospects who will also be playing for Australia in this year's Olympics."

Er, possibly Frank, but the squad actually raised more questions than it answered.
Okay, so the insistence of the Chilean federation to demand an 'A' team meant we couldn't send the Olyroos off for some serious hit-outs. And the unwillingness to tackle the Euro clubs head-on for the umpteenth time meant the usual catalogue of excuses from the English Premier League and various other top divisions.

But there remains a nagging doubt about selecting some players who will obviously play no part in the upcoming World Cup campaign – if Frank is serious about picking the BEST eighteen or twenty-two – while some are struggling to make the first team at their respective clubs. While it's true that a few games in the national team can help rebuild a player's confidence, it can also be soul-destroying to travel across the globe and sit on the bench for two-thirds of the time.

Frank will, quite naturally, argue for the defence, suggesting as he did on 'On the Ball' that he is looking for a squad of 30-35 players and the likes of Murphy, Casserley, Maloney and Chipperfield were all valuable contributors and nobody played badly and.....

Well, to be brutally honest, if any of the above mentioned players are in the squad of eighteen come crunch-time then we will have cause for concern. Nothing personal, you realise. It's just that it's difficult seeing any of those guys creating havoc against Colombia or Chile in the white hot atmosphere of a World Cup qualifier.

The fact is that there are a lot of players at good European clubs who are now fixtures with their clubs and have every right to put their hands up for international duty at every opportunity. Even these players must surely realise that unless they play twenty or so games together over the next eighteen months then another 'Iran-gate' is sure to occur.

Hungary (50)

Then, just as you start to chew your fingernails, Frank manages to put (just about) our best ever team on the park and they totally dismember Hungary in Budapest, 3-0, on a night when the Europeans were as bad as their recent reputation had suggested.

But few teams win 3-0 away from home anywhere in the world and the significance of the result cannot be underplayed. The Euroroos now seem to be firm believers. They can and will win more often than they lose, and there is now a serious desire to mix it with the big boys rather than stand back and admire reputations, as has been the case in the past.

Of course, a much sterner test awaits in Prague on March 30, but for now it is nice to sit back and recover from the shock of playing FOUR full internationals in the space of a fortnight. Strewth, if this keeps up Channel Seven might even get around to showing one or two. Er, only kidding...

Oh yeah, and we can't bring ourselves to calling 'em the LG Socceroos yet either...

YES ! I WAS THERE !!

Andre Kruger relates the tale of the day he personally czeched out the Aussies away form

Teplice, a Czech town close to the German border, was the place where the Australian Soccer Team were scheduled to playd a friendly versus the home country Czech Republic.
I live in the northern part of Germany, so my first thought was, "You *have* to go to that place to see the Socceroos."

Not only that, it was something like a jubilee, exact 20 years and one month ago, I saw an Australian National Team for the last time live, in Melbourne 1980, when they drew with Czechoslovakia 2-2 under coach Gutendorf.

After a few mails, I got an invitation from Soccer Australia to go to that game, free tickets and a plan to catch some of the players and crew members for a small talk. I got the hotel name and the instruction, what time before and after the match I can reach them.

My father wanted to go with me, and I promised him, that he will see a great Australian team, with highly paid professionals like Bosnich and Kewell from the English League.

On a rainy Thursday, we drove the way to Teplice. Not too far, just 450 kilometres, but we needed seven hours because of the bad roads in the eastern part of Germany, with the new highway not ready yet. I booked a hotel via Internet just thirty meters away from the players' hotel, so I can watch from the window to see them and catch up with them when they go out.

Before we left Hanover I picked up all my Aussie clothes. The flags, a cap (for my father too), a tricot - oh I have just a nice one from the Wallaby's, but doesn't matter - a scarf and a noisy trumpet. When I want to support them, I want to do it right.

I also put a few letters in my bag, something about me and my hobby and a few questions to different players. To give this to the people makes it easier to get in contact with them, and since I've started to do that, I've always got an answer. Oh no, forget. Not from Frank Juric, he wanted money to answer them.

Back to Teplice. I asked at the players' hotel for my tickets, but they are not there at the moment and the team was out for training. A big guard in uniform was in front of the Hotel, so it was not easy to pass him. I gave two letters to the girl at the reception, for Farina and Agostino, and she said she will give it to them. With cheap food and nice things to watch, the day was very fast over.

The next day, I saw the Socceroos coming from a training session. I moved fast to them, and I found Mr Farina. I told them who I am and asked for the tickets. "You have to talk to Bill Collins", he said, and "I got your letter", then he ran away.

Bill Collins came over and told me that I have to pick up my cards in two hours. A few words? No, no time, same for the players. The only information I got was that Harry and Mark are not in Teplice. Two hours later I found my tickets at the reception, and the letter I gave to Frank. The girl said Mr Farina had no time to read it. Huh, no time? He doesn't have to read it now and it needed only a few minutes.

I think he is not interested to lose his nerves spending the time with a fan. Okay, that's it. I have to say, I am a fan, of course, but I don't want autographs or to take pictures of every player. I try to talk to Agostino, but he was faster away than I ever saw him running on the Ground. I was alone with the guard.

So I walked on with my father right to the ground. We passed the town and every one watched that golden and green dressed crazy guys.

As we approached the ground, a few people with big microphones and cameras stopped me. *"We are from the Czech TV, so do you want to answer us a few questions?"*

Of course! I talked to them more than ten minutes, about the coming game, the chances of winning, other supporters, Mark and Harry and about Soccer Australia. They let me talk, and I am sure I gave some good publicity for my real home country.

The stadium looked very good, and, I think there was a crowd about 10,000 people. We meet all the other fans and we waited for the teams, but, who was that? A guy with a blue coat? Les Scheinflug! Right, it's him.

I walked toward him, but there was a fence between us. I gave him a smile and he came over, grabbed my hand. "Hhello, I am Andre from Germany", were the first words and then I started to talk very fast, just a few things about me to make him curious.

We fell into a nice conversation, about the old days. We started with the real Socceroos and some great moments. He remembered the Korea game in '73 and the 1974 World Cup. We also talked about a few players like Abonyi, Warren, Mackay and of course Peter Wilson. "No, no, he has no drinking problem, he just lives separate and rides his bikes. He is in good condition, Jimmy told me (also a player from these days)", said Les.

"Oh Les, I have to ask you about the Iran Game"

"Please don't remember me this day. No one wants to talk about this. I think a game like in Melbourne is only possible every 100 years. At half time, Terry Venables told the boys, you have to score one more goal, we had chances for 3-4 goals, we are two in front, but we need one more. Then came the break because of that idiot, so you know the rest."

I said, that I am sure if Ivanovic played, the second goal from the Iranians could not happened.

"Maybe you're right, but after all, the first goal was offside, I watched it again and again, it was offside. So, if you come sometimes to Australia, don't talk about that game, we have to kick it out of our brains."

I asked him if he knows someone who has the 73 and 74 games on tape and he answered that I have to ask Rale Rasic. So I told him that I got a letter from Rale and he is asking me for the videos. Les was impressed that I have the matches.

"Les, was your success with the under 17s in New Zealand more important than going to the World Cup in '74?"

"The second place for the Joey's was the best result an Aussie Team ever achieved, every one was watching us, but just for a few days. A World Cup at senior level is still the biggest, we had a fantastic time there".

So, the next World Cup is close, what do you think about the team today and Frank Farina as coach. Are you sure he is the right one to get our country to Korea/Japan?

"Today we are missing some of our best players. I arrived today in Teplice with two players from the Olyroos. They lost yesterday. Very, very unlucky against Holland. Our defence today is not very good, it will be a hard game for us not to go down very clearly. I am also here to support Farina and give him some help. He only has three years experience as a coach, so it's not easy for him. I told him that he has all the time in the world to try and test the players he want, also different formations..."

"Yes, but the next Cup is close....."

"...sure, but we want to build up a good, new young team".

He also said that they want to try to get Zelic back to the team, but that doesn't look easy at the moment.

"Les, you were born in Germany, do you still talk the language?

"Natürlich spreche ich noch Deutsch!"

Mr. Scheinflug answered perfectly. From that moment on we talked in German. He told me a lot about his early days, when he moved with his parents to Australia. He was born in Bückeburg, a town very close to Hanover.

An official from the Czech Football federation came over and told Les to come, but he said - just a moment - and we talked on.

"I drove so far from Germany, more than 450 Kilometres", I said. "Ha ha, that's nothing", was the answer, "We do that in Australia just for a coffee with a friend."

We talked about a lot of private stuff, but than the game was close to beginning, so I had to say bye. I gave him one of my letters, and when he put it in his pocket, I was sure it wouldn't get the usual, "I have no time to read it".

For me it was a highlight to meet Les Scheinflug. So if you ever see him in a Soccer Ground in Aussieland, ask him for the German guy he met in Teplice.

I was one of the proudest in the oval when they played "Advance Australia Fair". The game was not the best. The Czechs also missed a few players, so I can not understand why they are at the moment on place two in the world rankings. The poorest man on the field for me was the referee. Also unfair was the tall man with the number nine, Anderlecht player Jan Koller. He goes in for every tackle with studs up.

My Dad was very angry about Poborsky, he played real unfair, also Schalke's Jiri Nemec. He has a chance to work as an actor after his soccer career. The hero for the crowd was home player Pavel Verbir, last season he scored thirteen goals to help Teplice to reach second place in the Czech League.

But we saw also some crowd trouble, Czech Hooligans, but they lost versus the police, a good game. In the second half the people started with LA OLA, that was good because it was very cold. The wind from the close mountains with snow on it was freezing.

When the game was over, we stood up to give the players respect. Our position was very close to the entry to their changerooms. Craig Foster, Tony Popovic and Josip Skoko came over, waving and applauding us. Nice. The rest ran away, turning their heads around, not to look in the faces of their fans. For example Viduka, we looked straight each other in our eyes, so I waved over with my scarf and a smile on my face. He turned his head around and ran fast into the tunnel. For a second I was an 'ordinary' fan, just to steal a short smile from a player, I lost. I was angry about my self.

My father said the players are very arrogant No Dad, I said, they have other rules down under, not to smile means nice to see you! I am a bad liar.

"As they played sometimes today, they had no reason to be arrogant," Dad said.

The Czech press wrote later that Kalac was the worst man on the field, but that's wrong. He made a few brilliant saves.

The big Aussie horde walked back to the hotel, escorted by the police. We had a great day, a lot of fun and a little party after the game. So the beer was more than cheap, but I don't drink alcohol, my fault. I walked again over to the player's hotel, just to watch what's going on. I saw two little girls, aged around 12-14, standing in front of the hotel.

"What's happened, looking for an autograph? Y es, we were inside, but the coach from Australia came and told the guard to send us out of the hotel. Oh yes, I said, sorry for him, but he had no time to write his name down.

Did they REALLY print that?

You had to be concerned for the health of Alan Davidson if you read the March 28 issue of A&BSW. Writing about Davo's departure from Bulleen, Bert Van Bedaf advised us that the ex-Socceroo has *"... Japanese parentage (mother) cursing through his veins ..."*
One of our regular readers was wondering if the cursing is in English or Japanese. Perhaps Mrs Davidson is bi-lingual. Must pay closer attention the next time he speaks.

Time for a bit of housekeeping

It's been a few months since the last issue so it's time to make note of who played when. As usual it throws up the odd surprise. Who would have thought that Steve Corica would be the only player to start in all five senior internationals so far this year? With Bosnich playing once, Kewell once, and most of the first-choice defence playing once, what's the chances of Farina and co complaining about not enough games together before the final qualifier in November next year. Um, probably pretty good. Performances and results made a mockery of our lowly ranking although the prospects of a rapid rise in the ranks are good now that SocAus has signed a multi-million dollar deal with IEC to put on lots of internationals for the team. Er, sorry, just kidding...

Socceroos - 2000

		Chile	Slov	Bulg	Hung	Czech
Mark Schwarzer	Middlesbrough	Xy	X	X		
Mark Bosnich	Manchester United				X	
Zeljko Kalac	Roda JC					X
Shaun Murphy	Sheffield United	X	Xy	X		X
Jason Van Blerk	West Bromwich Alb.	X**R68**		Xy		Xo78
Luke Casserley	Marconi	X	X	X		so69
Hayden Foxe	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	X	X			
Stephen Laybutt	Parramatta	so75	X	Xy	X	
Stan Lazaridis	Birmingham City				so77	X
Craig Moore	Glasgow Rangers				X	
Kevin Muscat	Wolverhampton				X	Xo69
Tony Vidmar	Glasgow Rangers				X	
Tony Popovic	Sanfrecce Hiroshima					X
Con Blatsis	South Melbourne					
Lucas Neill	Millwall					
Paul Okon	Fiorentina	Xy	X		X	X
Josip Skoko	Genk	X	X		X	X
Craig Foster	Crystal Palace	Xo65		X	so64	so55
Kasey Wehrman	Perth Glory	so65		X	so64	so55
Danny Tiatto	Manchester City	Xo75		X	Xo77	
Steve Corica	Wolverhampton	Xo83	Xy	Xyo74	Xo64	Xo55
Scott Chipperfield	Wollongong	so83	Xo80	so76		
Brad Maloney	Marconi		so71	X		
Matthew Horsley	Wollongong			so74		
Richard Johnson	Watford					so78
Paul Agostino	1860 Munich	Xyo70		Xo76	so46	Xo69
David Zdrilic	SSV Ulm	so70	X	so60		
Pablo Cardozo	Sydney Olympic		so80	Xo60		
Harry Kewell	Leeds United				Xo46	
Mark Viduka	Glasgow Celtic				X	X
Clayton Zane	Molde FC					so69

Olyroos - 2000

		Niger	Egypt	S Kor	Slov	Holl
Danny Milosevic	Perth Glory					
Joe Didulica	Melbourne Knights / Ajax	X		X	X	X
Peter Zois	NAC Breda		X			
Nathan Wildy	Adelaide Sharks					
Hayden Foxe	Sanfrecce Hiroshima	X	X	Xy		
Tansel Baser	Trabsonspor	X	X	Xo46	X	
Chris Coyne	West Ham United	X	Xo17	X	so30	X
Stephen Laybutt	Brisbane Strikers	X	X		Xo30	
Eddy Bosnar	Sydney United		so17	X		
Con Blatsis	South Melb				X	X
Buddy Farah	Marconi Fairfield				Xy	X
Dragi Nastevski	Melbourne Knights					
Sebastian Sinozic	Wollongong Wolves					
Simon Colosimo	Carlton					
Ivan Zelic	Canberra / Adelaide Force					
Michael Santalab	Sydney Utd/Parramatta					
Levent Osman	Gippsland / Kingz FC					
Andy Vargas	Gippsland Falcons					
Brett Emerton	Sydney Olympic	X	X	X	X	X
Marco Bresciano	Carlton	Xy	X	X	so71	so60
Nick Rizzo	Crystal Palace	Xy	Xo46	Xo46	Xo46	
Kasey Wehrman	Brisbane Strikers / Perth	Xo90	so46y	Xy	so46	Xo60
Vince Grella	Empoli	so80	X		Xyo75	X
Lucas Neill	Millwall		Xy	Xo85	so75	X
Jason Culina	Sydney Olympic / Ajax	Xo80		so46	Xo71	X
Jacob Burns	Sydney Utd / Parramatta	X		so46		X
Kosta Salapasidis	Compostela				so60	Xo70
Bill Damianos	Xanthi					
Raphael Bove	Heerenveen / Dundee Utd					
Zeljko Susa	Melbourne Knights					
Mark Robertson	Burnley					
George Goutzoulis	South Melbourne					
Nick Sabljak	Adelaide City / Force					
Michael Garcia	Perth Glory					
Harry Kewell	Leeds United					
Daniel Allsop	Manchester City	X	Xo79	X		
Mile Sterjovski	Sydney Utd / Parramatta	so90		so85		
Michael Curcija	South Melb				Xo60	so70
Clayton Zane	Northern Spirit / Molde		so79		Xy	
Nick Carle	Sydney Olympic					
Carlos Gonzalez	Sydney Olympic					
Peter Buljan	Canberra Cosmos					
Archie Thompson	Carlton					
Christian Care	Marconi Fairfield					

Guess who's coming to Sydney?

It's been a while since we last checked up on who's got their tickets punched for September, and things have become quite a bit clearer since then.

First of all, the **South American** qualifiers have just wound up with Brazil causing a sensation in the final group match by walloping Colombia 9-0. Perhaps an even bigger shock was Argentina's failure to qualify. But if Chile can persuade Zamorano and Salas to make the trip then the Argies won't be missed too much.

Meanwhile, over in **Africa** things are finally all over with Nigeria, Morocco and Cameroon all earning their tickets, while South Africa may well make it four African representatives when they take on New Zealand in a play-off for the final place. Amazing finish in Group A (see below) where Nigeria needed to win their final match 4-0, and won 4-0 with two VERY late goals. Er, enough said, perhaps.

The Kiwis predictably strolled it in the **Oceania** qualifiers after having their share of problems dealing with the various Oceania minnows over the past few years, but only real surprise was the appearance of the Solomon Islands in the final. Oh, and perhaps in the appearance of PapuaNew Guinea in the semi-finals! Hmm, some strange things certainly go on when Australia doesn't participate in these things....

Europe is the continent likely to attract the most 'floating' support, with a number of, er, popular countries in the final mix. The identity of the qualifiers won't be known until later this year but the permutations are many and varied. Check the fixtures below...

Concacaf we'll catch up with next month with the zone finals a little way off yet.

Oceania – Final standings
Group A (all played 3): Solomon Is 9 (11-1), Fiji 6 (13-2), Samoa 3 (5-7), Tonga 0 (1-20)
Group B (all played 2): New Zealand 6 (9-0), PNG 3 (2-5), Vanuatu (0 (0-6)
Semi finals: Solomon Is 3 PNG 1, NZ 5 Fiji 2
3rd place match: Fiji 3 PNG 0
Final: New Zealand 4 Solomon Is 1

South America – Final standings
Grp A: Brazil 10 (15-1), Chile 7 (7-7), Colombia 7 (10-13), Venezuela 4 (5-9), Ecuador 0 (5-12)
Grp B: Uruguay 12 (7-2), Argentina 7 (7-4), Peru 7 (10-8), Paraguay 3 (7-9), Bolivia 0 (4-12)
Final Group: Brazil 7 (9-5), Chile 6 (6-4), Argentina 3 (5-5), Uruguay 1 (3-9)

Africa - Final standings
Group A: Nigeria 12 (12-7), Angola 12 (13-9), Zimbabwe 12 (11-11), Uganda 0 (3-12)
Group B: Cameroon 15 (12-4), South Africa 13 (12-6), Ghana 7 (7-9), Guinea 0 (4-16)
Group C: Morocco 13 (11-8), Egypt 11 (11-7), Ivory Coast 8 (13-10), Tunisia 1 (5-12)

Europe – Final tournament (in Slovakia, May 27 – June 3)
Group A : Spain, Czech Republic, Croatia, Netherlands
Group B: Italy, England, Slovakia, Turkey
Fifth Place Playoff: Third, Group A v Third, Group B
Seventh Place Playoff: Fourth, Group A v Fourth, Group B
Third Place Playoff: Second, Group A v Second, Group B
Final: Saturday 03 June 2000 - Winner Group A v Winner Group B

ALREADY QUALIFIED:
Australia, Brazil, Chile, Morocco, Nigeria, Cameroon, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait

Taking a STAND

March 4 was a day that Con Monteleone had been looking forward to some time. It was the day that he and other devoted fans would take their gripe direct to the source. And so it was that the Seven Network were forced to face the music in three capital cities.

Naturally, Studs Up eagerly participated in the peaceful demonstration outside the Seven offices in South Melbourne, and although the weather was brilliant (well, it *was* Melbourne in March!) the turn-out wasn't.

Which was a shame really. Con and his team had managed some mainstream media space in the weeks leading up to it, even if there were occasions when the papers failed to mention the time and day of the protest. More important, however, was the fact that a demostration was mounted at all. It proved that there are people who *do* care, people who realise what the Seven Network has *done* (and continue to *do*).

Timing is everything, however, and the current AFL stoush over television rights couldn't have come at a better time for the STAND crew.

For the benefit of non AFL-followers: The current AFL broadcasting rights (held by Seven) expire at the end of 2001. Nine, with Collingwood prez Eddie McGuire on board, figure they can mount the first serious challenge to Seven's stranglehold since the ABC er, inherited them for one year back in the mid-80's.

Seven, naturally, are shit scared at this possibility, and struck a deal with the AFL over Colonial Stadium to shore up their bargaining position, but television isn't the most important medium being discussed. The Internet has the potential to blow television away in the next decade, particularly if members can watch away games on the monitor. Noted heavyweights such as John Elliott can see the benefits of allowing clubs to cut their own deals rather than let the AFL strike a collective deal, but the problem with breaking ranks, of course, is that you fundamentally shift from a socialist agenda to a free-enterprise agenda. In a sport where drafts, salary caps and a level-playing field are pursued with vigour, it is obvious that the current crisis has a long road ahead of it.

The AFL have held firm, arguing that they are operating for the 'good of the game'. But it is somewhat ironic that after years of force-feeding the public with every form of AFL commercialism imaginable, the sport's governing body is now being accused of having lost touch with the average fan.

The common argument these days amongst Aussie Rules diehards is that the game has become too corporatised, with sponsors boxes full but the outer empty. The main reason behind all that bitterness is, of course, television. The Seven Network has become more than just a broadcaster of the sport, it has actively taken part in fixture scheduling. This is nothing new – the English Premier League has become a slave to BskyB, while American football has long toed the tv line. It's the old 'tail wagging the dog' syndrome, and usually comes about when the dog is too stupid or too scared to tell the tail to remember where it is positioned.

But what has happened with soccer and television in this country is on a different scale. The Seven Network, which has an enormous stake in AFL, suddenly became very concerned that they may not be a walk-up start when the new tv rights deal for 2002 and beyond is discussed.

Given the number of (both actual and perceived) conflicts of interest, it is unthinkable that Seven will miss out on all AFL rights, and while Seven screens AFL, it won't give a toss about soccer – in fact it is in its best interest to bury it. Just look at what they've done to the Super 12.

Footnote: The Australian's Peter Jenkins reported on April 7 that News Corporation (which owns the Rugby Union rights) had agreed to a five year extension to the Seven deal – taking the agreement through to 2005. The ARU are, naturally, bloody spewing. There is some perverse comfort in knowing that, for once, we're not the only ones.

Green Gully by a mile. Unless...

The typically late SU 2000 Victorian Premier League Preview (and early season review thrown in as compensation!)

Okay, it's time to let the cat out of the bag - the Victorian Premier League 2000 season has started. Given the amount of media coverage the league has obtained thus far, one could be excused for thinking that things couldn't get much worse.

Oh yes they could....

In fact increased media coverage could be the worst thing for the league right now. Get this. We're eight rounds into a 22 round season and the league management committee haven't even decided if there will be finals yet. No, we're not kidding. Remember, this is Victoria – by name and nature.

The problem stems from the barnstorming start to the season by Green Gully. The Cavaliers notched eight straight wins before conceding a late equaliser at Preston, yet they have already stretched their lead to eight points and few teams look capable of reducing the gap. Thoughts of closing it can be dismissed altogether, so naturally the Cavs are keen to retain the 'first post the post' system used last season. Twenty four goals from ten different sources is an indication of the firepower available to the front-runners while the defence remains amongst the most reliable in the league. In other words, this may be the most boring championship race in living memory. One is tempted to recall the exploits of Port Melbourne in 1995 when they won the minor premiership by a massive twenty-two points with a 22-3-1 record. Incredibly, they went out of the finals in straight sets and Altona Magic played Bulleen in the grand final.

It is somewhat ironic then that one club which will be pushing for a finals series is last season's runner-up, Port Melbourne. After pushing Green Gully all the way to the wire last term, the Sharks have struggled to make an impact thus far this season and their defensive frailties were on full display during a thrilling 3-3 draw at newly-promoted Oakleigh. The home side also hit the bar three times and four Sharks were booked in a performance which suggests they will struggle at the back without the reliable Rody Vargas (Gippsland) and up front without the prolific Peter Kakos (ditto).

Coach Peter Tsolakis can still call on the services of Nick Tsaltas and John Pappas up front, but it is at the other end that surgery may be required. Unless the likes of John-Paul Knezevic, Nick Palamaras and new goalkeeper Chris Roche can tighten up at the back, the Sharks will be hoping the possible finals aren't just restricted to the top four or five. As for Tsolakis, well, there have already been rumblings of discontent at committee level so, as they say, watch this space.

Cole: He's future's so bright...

But at least Port still have the coach they started the season with, which is more than can be said about Heidelberg, Bulleen and Bentleigh. All three clubs had lofty ambitions for the year but after failing to secure early wins the honchos at Heidelberg and Bulleen reached for the axe.

Certainly the most important change was at Bentleigh, where Harry Chalkitis was shunted aside for Gary Cole, who tasted success in the nineties with both Altona Magic and Bulleen. No real surprise there, with veteran club-hopper Millissa Fischer-Massa being a long-time admirer of Mr Cole's abilities, having a first-hand view of his work at Altona Magic. Welcome back Gary, the Premier League wouldn't be the same without you!

The squad contains many of last year's elements including reliable 'keeper Glenn Clarke, key defenders Theo Constantinou, Tom Karapatsos and attacking full back Harry Micheil, although the suspicion the defence is less than watertight lingers on. The Greens are great value at the other end though, even if the goals of Juan Nilo will be sorely missed. Sash Markovski continues to be a genuine danger up front however, and if Doug Mladenovic, Will Hastie and David Breslin can produce consistent years then the Greens will remain the team most likely to pounce should the leaders slip up.

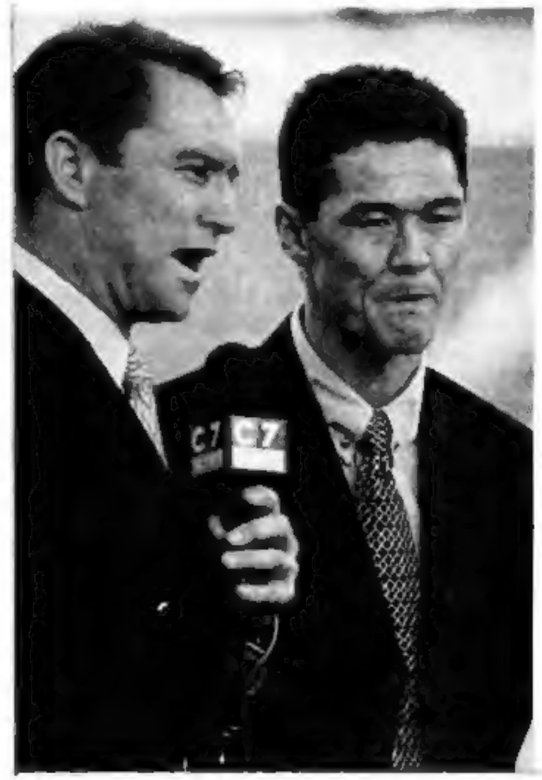
Meanwhile up at Heidelberg, Jim Pyrgolios paid the price for some dodgy results with the club in trouble both on and on the ground. Yes, on and on. Not only were they getting beaten on the park but their home ground was also in strife thanks to a remarkable sequence of events, beginning with an unusually high worm density, which in turn led to crows making a mess of the ground. Enter the council for some re-seeding, enter more birds to feed on the seed.

It didn't get much better on the park, either. Opening with successive defeats against newly-promoted Oakleigh and reigning champions Green Gully, the Bergers rebounded spectacularly with a 4-1 thumping of Port Melbourne with Opazo notching a hat-trick. However further defeats at the hands of Fawkner and Preston spelt the end for Pyrgolios, with Carlton youth coach Jeff Olver getting the nod. No real surprise there either, with Olver having a lengthy distinguished career with the Bergers and proving himself a more than capable coach of youth at Carlton. Olver plans to combine the duties of both jobs, but it's hard to see the Bergers committee accepting that arrangement if the club remains in the bottom four. The national youth league only has a couple of months remaining, but results at Heidelberg will need to improve in the meantime. The goals of Alfonso Opazo will be crucial, and the ex-Sunshine player has started in fine form but the spree will need to continue because elsewhere things aren't so productive.

Less straightforward in the coaching capers were events at Bulleen, where a dressing-room altercation between coach Alan Davidson and captain Danny Gnjidic led to some dirty laundry getting hung out. Although Davo's version of events is slightly different to the committee's, the end result is that he is free to concentrate on his C7 commentary commitments.

The straight-talker was keen to point the finger at off-season recruits Costa Kaimakamis (from Port Melb) and Chris Emsovski (Preston) and equally keen to hold up his hand as well. But when you're leaking two goals a game it's tough to pick up points and one win from seven matches was a just penalty for their defensive abnormalities.

The squad contains plenty of names and experience but what may be needed at the Veneto Club is a serious injection of youth and enthusiasm. That may come in the form of new coach Joe Mullen (yep, the Adelaide City legend) and if he can find a way to motivate the likes of Warren Spink, Vlad Babic and Sava Rusmir then Bulleen may well find their way back into mid-table. But he'll really need to tighten up that defence first.



"Er, fancy some overtime Davo?"

Another ex-Socceroo Micky Petersen is having a far better better time of it over the other side of town at St Albans. After losing the 1998 grand final to Bulleen under Vlado Vanis, the Saints suffered a hangover when Vanis left for Preston, and it was left to Vid Horvat to steer the club to mid-table safety.

Petersen has built on that work and produced a team capable of matching it with most, although their lack of depth was evident when going down 1-2 at home to Bentleigh. Joe Cuze retains a formidable presence at the back while Damien Vojtek, Kon Sianidis and Ivan Razov should provide enough firepower and invention to raise hopes of a top six finish. Carlton fans may also wish to note that Denis Ekeci and Ivica Klarica are running around with the Saints while Knights fans probably already know about Matt Urlovic, brother of Paul.

Elsewhere in the western suburbs, Altona neighbours Magic and East will be more than nuisance value again this season although injuries to key players will be crucial if a relegation battle is to be avoided. Magic may have won the 'derby' 1-0, but lost their president who resigned prior to the match, and with the squad lacking the quality and depth of previous seasons a mid-table place is probably their best hope. Darren McGrath is still between the posts so nobody is likely to likely to hammer them, and in Zoran Todorovski they have the man 'most likely to...'. But the likes of John Sapazovski, John Cvetanovski and Deny Lislajski will need to have huge seasons if the Magic are to trouble the frontrunners.

Altona East did well to finish above the drop zone last season and even managed to finish above their illustrious neighbours. Peter Ollerton is a shrewd coach and it may be too early to suggest the Phoenix will fall toward the relegation zone again, but they really need to do something about their current goal drought. It will take a mighty effort from George Angelos and Nick Papadopoulos if East are to stay out of trouble, but keep an eye out for Steven Bartol, Peter Groidis and Bill Petrovski, who are all capable of tucking the ball away.

Up in the northern suburbs it also looks like a year of mediocrity with Fawkner, Preston and Melbourne Raiders all failing to capture the imagination with their pre-season bartering. The Raiders have snapped up Lance Plunkett (Melbourne Knights), David Della Rocca and David Grbac, while Preston have lured ex-Carlton striker Alex Josifovski to Connor Reserve, but generally there is little to excite. The fact that only Preston finished in the top three last season would suggest the improvement is expected to come from within amongst the other clubs, with Melbourne Raiders the most likely to set out after the leaders. Jim Gacovski (Springvale White Eagles) could prove to be a useful pick-up for the club but the two Nicks, Cuculevski and Lazarevski will be expected to lead the way, along with ex-Olyroo George Slifkas.

Down south, Oakleigh have defied the critics by forcing their way into the top half of the table, with player-coach Ike Alagiozids, a former Gold Medal winner, combining with Bill Nalpantidis to form a lethal attack. The defence remains iffy, but good crowds at Jack Edwards Reserve are being treated to some great football on Friday nights, and one can only hope the Cannons are rewarded for their entertaining approach with mid-table safety, even if the title is light years away.

Which just leaves Green Gully, who are odds on to make it back-to-back titles minor championships after a blistering start which has seen them win their first eight matches. Coach Ian Dobson retains the Midas touch and with over a dozen players with NSL experience, the Cavaliers are destined to leave the other clubs in their wake.Zoran Markovski, Steve Douglas, Steve Mangos, Brandon Vassallo, Sash Becvinovski, Sonny Sevin, Ice Kutlesovski, should we go on? Yes we should, by mentioning Zdravko Atanasovski, the living talisman who is chasing his SIXTH successive Premier League winners medal after tasting success with Altona Magic, Bulleen and last year with Green Gully.

Motivation would appear to be the only factor capable of upsetting the Cavs this season, and with the national league second division now on hold, there seems little incentive for other clubs to break into the piggy bank before the end of the year. It all adds up to a meandering sort of season, with virtually all the interest centering around who is likely to be relegated.

Perhaps the VSF can inject a bit of life into proceedings by announcing that there will be a finals series. As tough as that would be on Green Gully, it would at least ensure the championship race will still be alive when the NSL finishes.

Something very fishy going on....

*There's been a few unsavoury odours emanating from up north, and the fans have all but disappeared, but as **Stephen Pitman** explains, there may be a very good reason why Queenslanders have turned their noses up at the Strikers....*

When the Brisbane Strikers played the 1997 NSL Grand Final in front of 40,000 noisy Queenslanders, neutral observers could have been excused for thinking that soccer in Queensland had "arrived" and that its future was secure.

The truth was these observers were, in fact, watching a bubble. Like all bubbles, it had a membrane-thin veneer, nothing except air in the middle, and a limit to how far the membrane could stretch before exploding and vanishing into the atmosphere.

The on-field success of the team and the hype of the Grand Final hid the fact that off the field the club had massive problems. The Strikers were a fragile entity propped up financially by the Queensland Soccer Federation (QSF) and its clubs (most of which were anything but rich) and by a Hyundai sponsorship believed to be in the order of $250,000 over 3 years. Even now, the club has little infrastructure of its own. Its playing venue is at the Queensland home of Rugby League and its administration is operated from QSF headquarters at Perry Park by a small and under-funded staff. It does not have the resources to operate a reserve or colts team (relying, instead, on the products of the Queensland's State League teams and the Queensland Academy of Sport to produce its players). It is, as intimated above, a bubble.

It has been managed, until recently, by a Trustee Board of Management drawn from the ranks of the QSF, which owns the club's NSL licence. Some of the people on this Board have, by some accounts, generated over many years a large amount of bad blood within the Queensland soccer community and within Brisbane's corporate and political circles. The Board has also displayed a lack of initiative and foresight which has become legendary amongst diehard Strikers fans in the know.

This manifested itself particularly in the seasons after the grand final victory, with things reaching a very low ebb in 1998 when coach Frank Farina left the club largely, it is said, in despair over the Board's incompetence. By then the financial situation had become extremely desperate, and the Board was casting about for ways of staying afloat. The solution it arrived at was to top up the Striker's finances by purchasing a new business and using the profits of that business to support the club.

This may sound great in theory, but it is a fitting testimony to the Board's abilities that the blue-chip venture it chose to secure the future of the club was prawn farms. Needless to say, the prawn farms continued to flop badly, causing creditors to launch legal action which threatened to spill over and damage the soccer club still further. By close of season 1998/99 the Board was in turmoil, with some members resigning, others owed money, and altogether insufficient funds to continue the club's existence.

Into this desperate situation, at the eleventh hour, stepped Tony Petty - a recently-arrived English millionaire who had opted for early retirement on the Gold Coast, but who was a wide-eyed innocent when it came to knowledge of the tortured history ofQueensland soccer. Petty had already saved the Gold Coast Gamblers State League team from extinction, and now chose to invest in the Strikers. It would seem, however, that he committed the cardinal sin of not thoroughly investigating this new business opportunity before he bought into it. His injection of cash saved the club and earned him the title of Chairman under the premise that he had bought the majority share in the business entity (Brisbane StrikersPty Ltd) set up to manage the club. It also earned him a living nightmare.

Like 1996/97 all over again, things looked rosy enough from the outside, with the team getting off to a flying start and leading the NSL field into December. But behind the scenes Petty would not have been finding much else to his liking

He was gaining a crash-course in the club's problems. Despite the team's winning start, Petty found that attendances were poor - a fact which at once astounded and appalled him Being a Londoner with limited experience of the sporting climate in this country, he was perhaps slow to realise that a winning football team in Brisbane does not necessarily equal spectator support.

This is largely because of Problem Number One - which is that hardly anyone knows about it! Brisbane is blessed, as it were, with an all-powerful, monopoly, daily newspaper (the *Courier-Mail*) which is, to all intents and purposes, unwilling to give anything but the most miserly coverage to the State's NSL team. So keen, in fact, is the Courier-Mail to provide readers with up-to-date and first-hand accounts of the Strikers' fortunes that it can't even be bothered sending its part-time soccer writer to cover the team's away matches Worse still, the journalist it employs in this part-time capacity produces such low-key and deadpan copy as to make a speech by former Reserve Bank chief Bernie Fraser seem like a blood-pumping outing on an exhilarating theme park ride. Those hardy souls determined enough to find news on the Strikers are put to sleep for their troubles.

Problem Number Two surfaced when Petty began knocking on the doors of Brisbane's corporate community for sponsorships. Their doors were found not only shut tight, but bolted and surrounded by barbed-wire fences. Petty also found that the club's tenancy of Suncorp-Metway Stadium was Problem Number Three This tenancy has been obtained on terms which do not entitle it to any share of proceeds from sale of food and drinks. This means that the only source of income accessible by the Strikers on match days is gate takings. Depending on who you listen to, the club is apparently not achieving even half the attendances required to break even, or is breaking even by skimping on advertising, promotion and pre-match and half-time entertainment

In mid-December, in a display of interest in the Strikers which was as unfamiliar as it was damaging, the Courier-Mail published a front page story alleging massive debts accumulated by the Club and an ownership dispute between Petty and the rest of his Board. By late December, having run up one cul-de-sac after another in pursuit of the dollars to secure the club's future, Petty had begun discussions with the Gold Coast City Council and potential Gold Coast sponsors about relocating the club to the Council's stadium at Carrara. These discussions were promising enough for Petty to begin giving the matter serious thought.

Soon, word got out about the club's possible move, and Petty confirmed that it was on the agenda - possibly as early as the New Year. Response to this from fans over the Christmas break was muted, and attendances reached rock-bottom, tending to confirm Petty's feeling that few people in Brisbane cared whether the club moved or stayed. Next, rumours surfaced that Petty had secured a sponsorship with Jupiters Casino to the tune of $1 million over 3 years, on the proviso that he gained full control over the club (which, if true, was an illuminating comment on the corporate community's rating of his Board colleagues). Petty denied the rumours

By the New Year, however, the penny had finally dropped amongst the club's fans that Petty was serious about moving it to Carrara. It dropped with the loudest "clink" amongst a loose group of loyal fans calling themselves the Banana Army, plus a smattering of others drawn to the group's internet site. Suddenly, these fans found that the Strikers meant more to them than they had previously dreamt, and they began to mobilise in opposition to the move. Over the next few weeks they mounted a concerted campaign to keep the club in Brisbane. This campaign included distributing anti-Carrara leaflets and shouting anti-Carrara slogans at home matches and writing letters and emails to anyone who would listen both within and outside the club. It also included the conduct of a media campaign featuring radio interviews and press releases to every news room in town.

It culminated with the placement of an advertisement on the back page of the despised Courier-Mail urging absent fans to turn out for the match against the Marconi Stallions to show their support for keeping the club in Brisbane. SBS was contacted, and responded by sending a crew to Brisbane to do an expose of the situation on the night of the Marconi game

Petty was by now copping the wrath of the diehard fans, the opposition of his Board, and the raised eyebrows of Soccer Australia which, apparently, was none too keen to see its Brisbane franchise moved to the Gold Coast, where several previous sporting ventures had recently gone base over apex. An hour before the Marconi match Petty walked into the fans' watering hole five minute's walk from Suncorp-Metway Stadium. He announced that the move to Carrara was off the agenda at least until the end of the season, but that if attendances did not improve the club could sink. He also asked for the fans' constructive participation in helping the club to lift attendances.

In doing so, whilst not walking away from the club, Petty has quite cleverly thrown some of the onus for the club's survival on Brisbane's soccer fans and, by implication, its grass roots soccer community. And that, very much, is the bottom line. Over the past few years these people have gone missing in action. Whilst 40,000 were prepared to cheer wildly at Frank Farina's after match speech on the occasion of the Grand Final of '97, when he described them all as "champions" and told them how proud he was to be a Queenslander, about 35,000 of those "champions" have regularly let down the club and the game since then.

Unless a good proportion of them wake up very soon they might not get to enjoy any more Grand Finals involving the Brisbane Strikers.

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New Joeys have a tough act to follow

It seems like only yesterday that those bloody Brazilians stole the Under 17 World Cup Final off our gallant Joeys but already the next batch of potential superstars has been named Thirty-three of 'em in all, under the watchful eye of Les Scheinflug until the next youth coach is actually announced sometime later this year. Later this year? Jeez, you'd reckon the bloke would have been appointed by now, eh? Especially with the Oceania qualifiers due to take place in Smoa in December. Shades of Farina in that one...

Operation 2001

Carl VALERI ACT
Adrien LABUTTE ACT
Steven ARNOTT ACT
Sean WALSH QLD
Daniel VARMA QLD
Ben STEVENS QLD
Andrew BYRNE QLD
Nathan COE QLD
Alex DAVANI QLD
Fred AGIUS SA
James FORDE SA
Mario KARLOVIC SA
Terry SMITH SA
Adam VAN DOMMELE SA
Russell WALLER SA
Fred AU VIC
Steve ESPOSITO VIC

David PUCCIO VIC
Massimo MURDOCCA VIC
Michael EDWARDS VIC
Theo PETDIS VIC
Darren BROXTON WA
Anthony DANZE WA
Ryan FREDRICKS WA
Gokhan ADA NSW
Steven BAVEAS NSW
Predrag BOJIC NSW
Michael BROWN NSW
Stephen HALLINAN NSW
Brett HOLMAN NSW
Jacob REX NSW
Phillip WESTON NSW
Matthew ENGELE NSW

A couple of months back **Kasey Puyenbroek** was good enough to forward a summary of the debacle in South Australia. A piece like this never goes out of date....

Who ordered Shark soup?

Late last year, the Hellenic Club of South Australia was placed into liquidation in an attempt by the administrators to make good some of the debts racked up by the club in its running of the Adelaide Sharks Soccer Club in the NSL.

As a consequence, the Sharks are not participating in this year's NSL. This situation has left South Australian soccer's image tarnished and the SA Soccer Federation holding the keys for an expensive, but so far unpaid for, brand new stadium that in the worst case scenario will see about 4,500 people every fortnight for the next 30-odd weeks. This is certainly not enough for the SASF to keep to the repayment schedule. This potentially places soccer in SA in danger, as a broke federation can't function.

I'd like to nominate the guys who ran the Sharks for a new award entitled "Idiocy in the Field of Sports Administration". Soccer Australia would get a nomination for "Best Supporting Role in a Farce/Joke in the Field of Sports Administration". There's an old saying that says 'I you say a lie often enough people will begin to believe it.' Well, to draw a long bow and bastardise a little, I think that the people involved in the Shark's consortium sprouted their far-fetched bullshit so much they began to believe it. They even sucked in SocAus.

Their continuous flogging of a dead horse not only killed a proud club but placed into jeopardy the playing futures of a senior squad, some of whom had moved from interstate with their families to play with the Sharks. As the Hellenic Club SA also runs teams in the SA Soccer Federation competitions, about 300 junior players are in limbo. With most other NSL squads filled, very few, if any of ther players signed by the Sharks/Stars will get to play at the top level this season, whilst some have already stated their intentions to retire.

By assuring Soccer Australia that they could survive the coming season, they virtually forced SocAus into re-admitting them for the fear of legal action should they be booted out. However, anybody with half a brain, and this of course counts out our governing body, could tell that the Sharks' planned re-launch and re-badging would solve nothing. And their extremely optimistic (read bullshit) claims that 6,000 people would watch them this season - and it would grow to 10,000 - were just marketing rhetoric to pull the wool over the (already semi-blind?) eyes of SocAus

Just where were these people going to come from? Thin air? Nobody, save for the hardcore support (itself dwindling) of last season, which was drawn predominantly from the Greek community of SA, would even think about handing over their hard-earned to watch this schmozzle of a team that represents a minority in the Adelaide community. They (i e. the huge untapped support for the game in Adelaide) want a NON-ethnic team in the vein of Perth Glory or Northern Spirit

They/we are not stupid. Did the bumbling fools in charge of the Sharks /Stars really believe that by changing the name to Southern Stars and by using the state's colours of blue, red and yellow that people would suddenly forget about the club's non-welcoming stance towards non-Greek people in the past (both perceived and real)?

I also give a huge brickbat to Basil "Faulty" Scarcella, our "Try-to-please-eveyone-but-in-reality-accomplish-little" head honcho. Fer Christsakes, the guy is from Adelaide, he should have known better. Could he possibly be such an incompetent as to not even know the most obvious things about football in his own home city? Things that the average Joe Blow football fan could have told him?

It seems so. To actually fall for the crap sprouted by ths Sharks/Stars consortium, and to believe that they would 'somehow' find the money to last a full season, when they barely lasted the full distance last time around, and then to 'blame' them when they leave SocAus in a hell of an embarrassing position by not even getting to the starting line, shows an incredible lack of foresight, leadership,and balls.

I believe that the 'Adelaide United' bid for entry encompassed paying the Sharks debt allowing them to avoid their current fate, liquidation, and continue playing in the SASF competition, in return for transferring their NSL licence to United. This would have been a win-win situation for 99% of football fans in Adelaide. Firstly we would have got a team that we could all support, a multicultural club for a multicultural city. Secondly, the majority of players would now have jobs instead of sitting out this season. They would have played for the new team or had time to seek a contract elsewhere. Lastly, the West Adelaide club, a club with a mountain of tradition, would have been able to continue on at a local level, probably lifting the level of the competition, and in all likelihood would have become a power of the local game.

That the Sharks/Stars consortium told Adelaide United to stuff it in their pipes and smoke it showed a narrow-minded and stubborn lack of regard for the many and highlighted the greed and stupidity of a few. I feel for the people who now wake up and realise that they no longer have 'their' club. The other clubs near this predicament (i e. in or close to financial administration, and in danger of being given the arse before season 2001/02 and I'm talking looking at you guys Mr Puma, Mr Knight and Mr Falcon) will have looked at this situation with interest and probably fear

Hopefully, when the time come they remember the risks they are taking, not only with money but with their players at all levels, their loving (if few) supporters and the good of the game

Summer Soccer - It's *Supposed* to be Hot!!

Remember the slogan that launched summer soccer all those years ago? It seemed a nice play on words at the time but a decade on it seems the joke isn't funny any more. Already this season Marconi's Buddy Farah has fallen seriously ill after playing in mid-afternoon heat in Perth, prompting a war of words between clubs, doctors, players and federations.

Perth, of course, are the target of most criticism, with no floodlights at their home ground. But it is silly to think that other clubs aren't involved. Yes, the temperature does remain high right through to 7 or 8pm on those scorching days and when there is no wind....

It all adds up to the clubs and federations providing a safe working environment. You know, the sort of thing that will cause your shop steward to happily shut down the production line

But where does the buck stop? SocAus? FIFA?

Well, FIFA will (perhaps correctly) claim that the Laws of the Game adequately cover all situations thrown up by mother nature by conveniently handballing the tough call to the referee of the day. Which may be fair enough but while the referee has plenty of precedents when it comes to flooded or icy pitches, the sun is something the game's leaders have yet to get their heads around

No, SU doesn't have the answer. But we do have a suggestion – take a glance at that other sport the Poms like to think they invented. Cricket. Nothing causes consternation and agitation more than teams playing in gloomy conditions, but a couple of decades ago the lawkmakers decided that there needed to be a definitive measuring stick the umpires could call upon.

Enter the light meter. Simple, effective, accurate, and its decision is indisputable.

Such a pity then that FIFA can't (or won't?) introduce a similarly effective measuring stick. Just as Channel Nine unleashed Tony Greig and his 'weatherwall' on unsuspecting lounge lizards, surely the zoobs in Zunch could recommend a slightly modified thermometer of sorts, which, when it reached a certain point, would enable the referee to 'offer the heat' to the two captains

All you'd have to do then is make sure the bar had enough bar staff to cope with the unscheduled rush. Yeah right, and police might fly without helicopters.

If you're offended by bad language, turn the page **NOW**.

Occasionally you get stuff in your e-mail that is too good to delete. In fact it's so good you finish up re-printing it in a fanzine. The origins are murky, but this version came from a Sheffield United list, and given their form in recent years, perhaps the tone isn't too surprising.

Not quite Aussiefied, but you'll get the picture. Oh, and if you're offended by bad language, this is your last warning – turn the page NOW.

I'm feeling all angry about these modern day footballers, I know why they have gone all soft - It's because of poncy names. That's what it is

Remember in the old days, when footy players kicked a fucking ball made out of ten pound of clay stitched inside a steel-reinforced leather shell with laces made out of piano wire?

Well, in them days players could only survive the rigours of the game because they were called things like Albert, Arthur, Bert, Harry, Bill, Eddie, Bob, Jack and Tommy. Fucking tough names for tough men, them was.

And what do we have now? Jason, Wayne, Dean, Ryan, Jamie, Robbie. Fucking tarts' names, they are. Great big fucking puffs. No wonder the ball's like a fucking balloon and shin pads is like slices of bread

In the old days you never saw a Len Shackleton or a Billy Wright with a puffy little Sondico piece of paper down his little thin socks. Fucking shinpads in them days was made out of library books, and socks was like sackcloth. Same with the jerseys. Fucking shirts with holes in now - so they can breathe. Yes, so that little Jody's hairless chest can breathe and he doesn't get a chill

Fuck off. Stanley Matthews used to dribble round Europe's finest wearing a fucking tent and shorts cobbled together from the jacket of his de-mob suit. Aye, he fucking did. No wonder players fall over all the time whenever an opponent comes anywhere near them.

And they never used to show their arses at one another either. Can you imagine what might have happened if Don Revie had flashed his ring at Nat Lofthouse during a City-Bolton Wanderers game? He'd have got one of them size-10 hobnail fuckers up his bastard chuff. Fucking therapy for stress my arse!

Stan Collymore slaps his missus about and he takes three seasons off with stress counselling. What the fuck is that all about? In the old days it was expected for footballers to belt the old sow abouta bit, specially after a bad defeat. And the women used to expect it, and so they should have. They was lucky to be married to footballers. Ha! Trevor Morley got a kitchen knife in his back off his wife and was out of action for three month. Soft twat. Archie McShitt of Port Vale got run over with horse and cart one Friday night and he still turned out against Bradford the following day. And he scored two goals. That's cos his name wasn't "Trevor". Good old Archie. Broke his hip, both his legs, murdered his wife and buried her under the patio and still made the England team for the Home Internationals. Did he have any "stress counselling"? Did he bollocks!

And drugs? There was none of that in the old days. Oh, no. In them days it was a quick shot of morphine before kick-off and you was lucky if you got that. By half-time it had all but wore off so they pumped you full of laudanum. None of this cocaine sniffing and shooting up class A narcotics.

Goal celebrations? Don't talk to me about goal celebrations. Crawling on the floor and thrusting their hips at the crowd. Huh! I'd like to have seen Cliff Bastin do that after a run down the left flank and crossing for Alex James to fire home a winner. Handshakes...and that was all you got. That and a wank in the showers afterwards. But it was a proper wank...all man stuff None of these puffy wanks between blokes that you get nowadays with players like Graeme Le Saux and Stephen Gerrard. Allegedly. In them days, there was nowt wrong with it cos it didn't mean nowt. They used to say there was a "gay atmosphere" in the dressing room after the match. But it didn't mean nowt mucky. Just a bit of harmless spanking the plank among healthy young sportsmen. Aye. I know. Me dad told me.

Sixty grand a fucking week! Ha! I wouldn't pay 'em tuppence. Two bob Tommy Lawton used to get.. a month! And Tom Finney still worked as a plumber four days a week when he was playing for England. It's true, you know. Fucking is. Players had to work them days just to make up their money Not like today. Stan Pearson had to clean sewers and doubled up as Old Trafford shithouse cleaner. He had to go off during one game because some cunt had built a log cabin and blocked the U-bend. And that Eddie Hapgood was a male model...though he never liked to talk about it

So I say we start calling kids real male names again. If you're having a kid, don't even consider puffy names and shite names like what people call their kids these days. Otherwise what we gonna get in twenty years' time? The England team full of players called Keanu, Ronan, Ashley and fucking Chesney. Fuck that! Call your kids Alf, Herbert, Len, Frank, Fred and Wilf And let's get the puffs out of the game once and for all. I thank you
UP THE BLADES
Dicko

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A Spirited Season

Is an excellent publication detailing (in great detail) the highs and lows of NS's first NSL season Micky Brock has done his homework and talked the publishers into producing something that wouldn't be out of place at some of the world's biggest clubs. If it happened during 98/99, it's in 'A Spirited Season'. A great edition to any Oz soccer library and we strongly recommended all fans purchase one. And no, not just because Brocky's an old mate either....
Ring the club on (02) 9460 2187 or just pick one up at North Sydney Oval the next time you're there.

WIN A COPY OF A SPIRITED SEASON !

Thanks to Micky, SU has a few copies of 'ASS' to give away, and all you have to do to win a copy is tell us why Northern Spirit are having such a crap second season. Is it because:

A. Graham Arnold isn't that great a coach and he rotates his squad so much the players aren't sure of their place in the team and have collectively gone into their shells?
B. The Bob Standers have placed so many average players on high pedestals that the duds have over-inflated opinions of themselves and attempt passes/moves/shots beyond their capabilities?
C. Injuries, suspensions and tantrums have created a generally frail atmosphere in the dressing room?
D. NS over-achieved in their first season after so many clubs had 'ordinary' seasons, found themselves in the finals, and created unrealistic expectations for this season?
E. They've suffered the 'Carlton second year blues' syndrome, and we all know what happened to the coach at the end of that season .
F. Nah, I've got a far better explanation... (please use 25 words or less)

Send your entries to the usual addresses (see page 2) and we'll let the usual yobbos pass judgement on the submissions. Before they get too tanked, of course

The Soccer Place

Is another store devoted to ensuring soccer fans AND clubs have access to just about everything they need. Everything from ball bags to corner flags. Even line-marking liquid! They may even start stocking Studs Up and 'TBGttHotNSL' if enough of you keep asking for it! Open either 6 or 7 days a year (depending on the time of year) they can be located at:
The Northern Road, Luddenham or give 'em a call on **(02) 4773 3123.**

Dear Studs Up - P O Box 53, Oakleigh South 3167

or

studsup @ ozemail.com.au

First up, a welcome contribution from Kiwi legend and part time nude centrefold Grant Stantiall, who attempts to seek the positive side of the Kingz/SkyTV deal.

While it is great news to finally have the SKY deal signed with the Kingz, it will be interesting to see the ramifications of the deal which also means SKY get the rights to screen the Chatham Cup final and the National League Final (if the league goes ahead).

Kevin Stratful, the NZS chairman and also Kingz board member, has been involved in the SKY deal but he is now looking to be at loggerheads with NZS CEO Bob Patterson, who was midway through tying up a deal with TVNZ to screen the Cup Final and National League Final with the state broadcaster.

In trying to understand what is best for New Zealand soccer, my own opinion is that the SKY deal now opens the way for the Kingz to go forward and settle into the league for the rest of the season without having to worry about where the next dollar is going to come from. New Zealand soccer needs a successful Kingz side.

If the Kingz are destined to fail, then there really isn't much of a future for soccer in this country, as the national league has failed to attract sponsors willing to inject the kind of money SKY has pumped in. The standard of play is also a step down or two from what we've seen in the NSL. The Kingz must now concentrate on the league and attempt to gain a top six position. They must also strengthen the team with a couple of new signings.

SKY must now look at marketing their team. A CEO must be put in place right now. Attracting the masses who attended the U17 champs is a must. Negotiations with OFC and FIFA is also a priority. The current situation means that Soccer Australia will delay the pruning of the league until the 2000/2001 season finishes. The Kingz have a very short timespan in which to prove they can cut it in the NSL and to get an extended approval from the governing body to continue playing in the Australian competition.

The first half of the season has been a nightmare off the field – no question. However, on the field, the team are playing attractive football and positioned well to challenge for a top spot. They are playing the kind of football I'm happy paying to watch.

The National League is a poor second best, but if the Kingz can force a stay of execution, it will compliment the Kingz NSL setup quite nicely. If the Kingz disappear will we be happy to be among the 50 odd spectators attending a national league game at Centennial Park or wherever?

And also, something from left field (well, Sean Brown, actually)

Dear Studs Up
The attached article appeared in the Herald Sun on 22/1/2000, on page 15.
"A former National Soccer League player charged with speeding was yesterday told by a magistrate his behaviour was "verging on the imbicilic".
Damon Collina, who was a member of the Melbourne Knights last season, pleaded guilty in Heidelberg Magistrates' Court after being caught speeding on a surburban road in July last year. The champion striker, 21, was clocked travelling 84 kmh in a 60 kmh zone in Para Rd, Greensborough.
Magistrate Peter Nealy convicted Collina and fined him $500 but allowed him to keep his licence.
Surely this is a contender for 'Did that really happen?' for two reasons.
One, that he was speeding. And two, that the Herald Sun found it newsworthy.
It must also be a contender for 'Did that really matter...'. Thank You.
P.S. What is a champion striker doing in Greensborough anyway?

The *real* problem with Australian soccer?

Rather than look at the effect of a major Soccer Australia problem, Stuart 'Scoop' Jones, a regular contributor to the OzSoccer (internet) mailing list, sat back for a while and looked for the cause. He agreed for his response to be re-printed in SU.

Having read all the emails on SA and having sat out of the game for a little while here is my point of view, although it won't matter 'cos nothing will change in soccer in this country because the people at the top think they are doing a job and are comfortable.

I think the greatest indictment on the game in this country is the people not involved in the game. The likes of Frank Martin, Chris Tanner, Steve Copping, Micky Brock should be involved in promoting the game at SA. The likes of Ray Gatt, Paul Goodwin, Bonnie Mersiades, Matthew Hall, Michael Reid, Mark Fowler, Alan Clark, John Vrtaric should all be being paid to put together a media guide and a weekly SA promo/paper promoting the Aussie game, as well as huge media guides. I too have been waiting to get a better guide as I am too embarrassed to send a copy of the paper one to my friends in the media in the UK. SA has got money now - the books prove it (according to them anyway).

This season I have put together my own stats based on the match reports, not what SA sends out - and guess what? They are completely different to SA weekly stats but mine are right. Micky has even come across a situation where a player should have been suspended but SA stats were wrong so that person played! Why don't SA pay people like Andrew Howe, Binesh Mudaliar, Greg Stock, Roy Hay, Richard Kreider to keep stats and make sure their own are cross checked.

The greatest thing a sport has is its people. Having stepped out of it for a while I realise just how bad it is now that so many great people have left the game. These new people have brought in only silly things;

Eg If this was the interim season until a new league now that is not going ahead what of next season. What do clubs think of SA signing away there signage rights? What happened to all the marketing Marconi was going to do, is the company still there? It all goes to prove use Soccer people with experience in business and no-one else. You must understand the culture and the passion.

Without passion there is nothing and football in this country lacks passion where it counts - in the office. Bonnie is correct there are no processes in the head office - never have been. It is time a major corporation took over and cleared the place and started with new procedures job descriptions etc.

No guts no glory, the love of the game will always be there and now she who must be obeyed has gone to Sweden to visit her folks for a while I guess I will see more games again. However I think the game is going through a down period at the moment.....look at the crowds!

So many names in this email could do so much but what do the big wigs care! We should have major exposes on SA in the media - a "What have they really done" piece? But who has the guts or wants to even bother. Soccer in this country is about writing match write ups, as much as I hate the negativity I am starting to yearn for investagative journalism on soccer in this country, a la the old fleet street. Except lets leave the Greek media to there own world - I wonder if you call that stuff journalism or creative writing?

Anyway nothing will be changed but to finish on a positive note - at least Wollongong is in the top six at this stage.

What's in a Name?

Corinthians, Juventus, Arsenal, Everton, Heart of Midlothian, and Espanyol. What d all of these clubs have in common?

A) They are the six best clubs in the world.
B) Dave Jones of Southampton has been on scouting missions to watch their youth teams.
C) Mike Conroy has scored for them.
D) None of the above

The answer is of course D. The other answers can be excluded as follows.

A) Everone knows that Everton are a spent force
B) Dave Jones is no longer with Southampton
C) FIFA '99 on the Playstation doesn't count.

They do however have one startling fact in common. They do not mention the name of the city in their name. Did this hinder any of them over the years? No, it did not. Do they have their own identity and a huge international following? Yes, they do.

A lot has been said since I started following Carlton that we have to change our name. I simply do not understand. We are Carlton Soccer Club. That shows where we started, and what our history is. It's a cultural thing. The main argument in favour of changing our name are that we no longer play in Carlton and that we stop non-Carlton Aussie Rules supporters coming to games.

It doesn't matter where we play our games. We are still the same club with many of the same supporters sharing the same dreams and memories as they have over the last few years. The Aussie Rules supporter, though a passionate and amicable fellow, does not tend to be a rocket scientist. The reason that they are not attending games is not due to the name, but because they think that they do not like soccer, as that's what their father and father's father drummed into them. Do we think that all these AFL supporters are pottering off to Sunshite or to see the South Melbourne bellends on a weekly basis? If they are, these clubs aren't declaring the full attendance. We could boost our attendances by tapping into this market but a name change won't do it.

What is the answer? It's all well and good for me to sit here chuntering away without making any suggestions. How about this? We kick off games at Olympic Park two and a half hours before centre bounce at the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground not Michael Conroy Garden). The AFL supporters whose teams are playing at the MCG that afternoon get half price entry when they show their club's membership card at the gate. OK, we're not getting the full ticket price but half of something is better than all of nothing. We have nothing to lose by trying something like this. Let's face it, if we get many more crowds of 1700, this time next year, we'll all be chanting for MacNicol as opposed to questioning his sexuality.

We have nothing to gain from a name change. Except for yet another couple of years of establishing ourselves as a Melbourne sporting identity. We have an identity now. Let's not lose or forget everything that has been put into creating this identity over the last few years. Lou Sticca made a soccer club in a place called Carlton. Thus it was called Carlton Soccer Club. We may have moved on but WE ARE CARLTON. Be proud of it and never forget.

May the scores be with you.

Darth Conroy.

Did that REALLY happen?

JANUARY

11 – The Sutherland and St George Leader contains a full back page of soccer, with details on the new Southern Sydney Sharks. Nothing we don't already know about but its the first public release of information to the media since the bid venture was formed way back in May last year.
12 – Marconi host Macedonian club Pobeda in a friendly at Marconi Stadium and the kick-off is postponed 15 minutes while the thousands amongst the local Macedonian community try to get through the turnstiles. Pity we don't have that problem at NSL matches. Oh, the match finished 0-0.
16 – Leeds United announces the signing of Danny Milosevic on a three year contract. The transfer fee is a reported $165,000. Oh, and Joe Simunic is off to Hertha Berlin…
24 – Paul Agostino causes a stir at Munich 1860 by scoring four goals for the reserve team in a 4-1 win over the first team!
27 – Sydney United sack coach David Ratcliffe with club president Marko Franovic apparently "pressured" by supporters into wielding the axe. Supporters? Er, we didn't think there were any left….

FEBRUARY

1 - Melbourne Herald Sun columnist Jon Anderson delves into the bottom drawer and comes up with an article on hairstyles (bear with us…) and reveals that John Kosmina used to wear a 'mullet-style' cut. Er, a free SU to the first non-scriber who walks up to Kossie and asks "Why d'ya get ridda ya mullet?".
10 – Sky TV buys a 80% stake in Kingz FC (see Dear SU)

MARCH

12 – Carlton defeat Brisbane 1-0 but the mood remains iffy with an official attendance of just 1,402 – the lowest in the club's history.
13 – (We should preface this comment by saying that Monday's 'The Australian' sporting section provides excellent value for 50 cents). The soccer page is devoted thus: English Premier League 55% (with picture), European round-up 20% (with picture), advertisement 8%, NSL round-up 17% (no picture). Well, what do you expect when Rupert has such an interest in the Premier League…..
23 – Bolton Wanderers go ballistic when the rumours of **Con Boutsianis**' woes are confirmed. Yes, the ex-Glory star (right) WILL be required to attend the Melbourne County Court on May 15, which is a bit unfortunately considering the first division play-offs commence on May 13. Could be hypothetical of course, with Bolton sitting about ninth as we type this….
28 – Disturbing edevelopments at A&BSW where a public announcement urges people NOT to open any e-mail originating from the address johneconomos@hotmail.com as the authorities have the address under investigation. It seems somebody is playing a practical joke which some people aren't finding funny….

And now a message from Derek Mott

The First Annual Soccer Programme Awards

This year is the first in which soccer programms from Australia and New Zealand will be reviewed and awraded prizes. The awards are open to ANY soccer club inAustralia and New Zealand and all they have to do is submit at least three (3) different editions of their match-day programme.

Awards will be on offer for the following categories, including:

- The best NSL programme
- The best Australian programme (outside the NSL system)
- The best New Zealand programme (outside the NSL system)
- The best State-wide programme (depending upon the number of entries in a particular state)

The criteria that the judges will be looking at include:

- Readability & Layout
- Provisión of Information (incl. news, fixtures, ladders, team line-ups and scores)
- Visitors information
- Value for money

Any queries can be forwarded to:
Derek Mott, P O Box 261, Collins Street West VIC 8007

And if you fancy escaping the Oz winter for a few weeks you may like to

Look out for....

April 8-15 – Melanesian Cup – in Lautoka, Fiji
5 nations: Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

June 6-14 – Polynesian Cup – in Papeete, Tahiti
5 nations: Tahiti, Tonga, American Samoa, Samoa (another derby, Les!), Cook Islands

June 20-28 – Oceania Nations Cup Finals – in Tahiti
6 nations: Australia, New Zealand, winners and runners-up in Melanesian and Polynesian Cups.

August – Oceania Under 18 women's tournament – in Nukualofa, Tonga

December – Oceania Under 17 Championships – Grp Phase – in Apia, Samoa
Group 1: Australia, Solomon Is, Samoa, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, American Samoa

BuLLEtiN BoArD

Studs Up Merchandise now available

Yes, it's true! Now YOU can be the most neutral fan in the stadium.
Just the thing for local derbies, where rabid fans will think twice before taking a swing. Recently road tested at Somers St where Hellas were giving 'em a spanking, two fine specimens decked out in SU clobber were bypassed by both sets of supporters as the fracas meandered around them.
So, what's available, we hear you mumble?
T-shirts or Polos, available in stylish white (with black logo) or even more stylish black (with white logo), sizes are strictly limited to medium, large or extra large..
The logo is the semi-legendary one which appears on the cover, measures approximately 8cm x 5m and sits nicely over the left nipple.
The SU caps are of the convenient 'one size fits all' black variety, so even the biggest head can be protected from the sun, wind, rain and stray flares.
This offer is strictly limited to SU subscribers, after all, we wouldn't want any old supporter seen in this stuff. So be proud, wear the ultimate sign of neutrality.
T-shirts $20 Polos $27 Caps $12
(All prices including postage)
Send your choice of remittance off to P O Box 53, Oakleigh South 3167
And be prepared to be the best dressed fan at the finals.

The Keeper's Arms

Is a new soccer-theme pub in North Melbourne, the old Sir Robert Pell Hotel at 351 Queensberry St. It's just near the Vic Market and from all accounts is something Melbourne has badly needed for years. They show the usual live matches on Foxtel and so on but it certainly provides a better atmosphere than your mate's lounge room. Oh, and the bistro is up and running as well so there's no reason to get fuelled on an empty stomach.
Ring the pub on 9329 7081 for more details.

Newcastle & Adelaide programmes required (semi urgent)

Trevor Moore is a regular reader who dabbles in programme swapping and he's extremely keen to hear from fans who may have some spare Newcastle Breakers and/or Adelaide Force progs from this season. It might be in the interests for the clubs to get in contact because there's a fair chance they may get mentioned in an overseas publication. Anyway, Trevor can be contacted via 58 Tristan St, Carindale Qld 4152.

Finally – The Soccer Australia Website (Phase 1) has arrived.

Yes, you read it right, it's finally happened. Go to www.socceraustralia.com.au.
Seeing is believing.

Are your flares faulty?

An important Community Service Announcement from Studs Up.
(Source: Melbourne Sunday Herald Sun – March 26, 2000 – Page 38)

Voluntary Product Recall
Pains Wessex marine distress flare Kits and Handsignals

Pains Wessex has become aware that some of its Orange Handsmoke MK3 and Red Handflare Mk2 flares manufactured between October 1999 and January 2000 (inc.) may be affected by a quality problem.

Defective adhesion of ignition paint to the striker plug in certain circumstances may prevent the flares from being lit. This fault does not make the signals unsafe

If your flares fall within the above dates of manufacture return them to your point of purchase for a no-charge replacement.
For assistance call the toll-free support line on:
1800 111 028 from 9am – 5pm EST Mon to Fri.

Pains Wessex apologises fro any inconvenience caused by this recall.
Pains Wessex Australia Pty Ltd ACN 004 669 452

Apologises? So they bloody should! Can you imagine the thoughts of those poor hooligans who go to all the trouble of sneaking their flares into NSL grounds and then the bloody things don't even have the decency to light? And what about their toll-support line? Okay, lots of hooligans have mobile phones at matches these days, but's NSL games aren't played between 9am-5pm, so who are they gonna turn to then, eh?
We reckon the least Pain Wessex should do is provide on-site support at NSL grounds, helping the hooligans at least get their bloody monies worth.

And finally.....

One of the occupational hazards of being a national fanzine editor is the number of interstaters calling up and enquiring "When is the next issue coming out."
Of course the second question is "What's news?" Er, news or rumours....
Yep, you guessed it. The next issue will be out when people stop ringing up and asking what's news. Being the nice blokes we are, we just can't resist chewing the fat with fans, but as you can imagine, the longer the time between issues, the more fans ring up and ask question one, which leads to question two, which leads to further delays.
The solution? We could really use some volunteers at SU just to make sure the issues get out on time. So if you want to learn about Aussie soccer, arrange to spend a few hours in the SU offices doing some archiving. Oh, and answer the phone occasionally...
Until next month (yes, month!)